1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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reduced to a system of merely occasional assistance. According to my informants the change is due primarily to the high cost of the *egbe*, which to-day few farmers can afford. This is no doubt true if we understand 'cost' in the relative and not in the absolute sense. In the very closely balanced budget with which most Nupe farmers must reckon to-day the comparatively large single outlay for the *egbe* may prove an insuperable difficulty. But this is not the whole picture. A cost is high only measured on the profit it can realize. And here we have seen that one of the most essential kinds of profit—moral profit—which the *egbe* can realize, namely, its assurance of the economic balance between the generations, has itself lost much of its significance in the life of the community.

The second type of collective work, the *dzolo*, is less important than the *egbe*. It is practised only for harvesting of those crops which demand a large working team (ground-nuts, cotton, and beans) and consists in the arrangement among a number of farmers to work in turn on each other's farms. The host provides the meal after the work. But there is no drumming or dancing, nor is any competition involved in the work of the *dzolo*. Neither is the mechanism of the age-grade associations utilized for this collective work, which is carried out on a much smaller scale than the *egbe*, and only between friends, i.e. families whose heads are friendly with one another. In the *dzolo* the tie of friendship evidently supplies that incentive to collective work which, in the *egbe*, is entrusted to the appeal of music and dance and the stimulus of competition.

WAGE-LABOUR

Assistance in farm-work by means of paid labour plays on the whole (we must add as yet) an insignificant part in Nupe production at large. It is called *kantsú* in Nupe but is often referred to by the Hausa name *lada*, i.e. wages. It is employed by the owners of farms who are not themselves farmers or who for other reasons cannot themselves look after their land. Paid farm-labour is a new thing in Nupe. It has no place in the traditional system of land-tenure and *efakó* work. Characteristically, it is almost completely absent in the rural districts; it is employed mostly in the large commercial centres in which a considerable proportion of the population belongs to the well-to-do 'professional classes', such as Kacha, Jebba, and, above all, Bida.[1] Let me give you a list of the cases I recorded in which wage farm-labour was employed. The employers were a number of traders in Kacha who had bought some land a few years ago but did not work it themselves; a number of traders in Bida; two Mallams in Bida; a Mallam in Jebba whose health did not allow him to work on the land (he was employing wage-labour for the first time); Native Administration officials in Bida—a few policemen, and teachers at the Bida Middle School; and lastly, the village chief of Kacha (who is at the same time District Head) whose time is taken up by official

[1] One of my Bida informants, himself a well-to-do member of the 'intelligentsia', estimated that six out of ten farmers in Bida employ wage-labour. Though I should regard this estimate as much too high it is significant for the outlook of the urban *bourgeoisie*.

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lays down the rules of behaviour for *ena* members, and which is again valid for life. These rules demand friendliness towards one another, and avoidance of all quarrels; mutual assistance in work (though not with regard to loans); respect towards one's superiors in the group; and respect also for the sanctity of marriage among all fellow members. The significance of this last rule, which applies to brides as well as wives, in age-grade associations the lifetime of which comprises the years when the adolescents first awake to the reality of sex, when they court and finally marry, need not be emphasized especially. Yet only in the village can the rule be regarded as tending to eliminate quarrels and feuds which must disrupt the community. In Bida it is in effect abetting matrimonial laxity outside the small group to which this code applies. The narrow political and class loyalty of the Bida *ena* has thus its counterpart in the no less narrow *esprit de corps* with its qualified respect for matrimonial rights.

In the case of a breach of the age-grade code the culprit is summoned before the *Etsu* and *Ndakotsu*, who have the right to punish him. A first, light offence may entail only a warning. Repeated offences will be punished more severely. If a young man shows himself lazy in *egbe* work or reluctant to fulfil the obligations of collective farm-work, it is regarded as sufficient punishment to order him to work in the back row, among the youngest and most inexperienced *ena* members. In the case of more serious offences the penalty may take the form of social ostracism: the *Etsu* and *Ndakotsu* would rule that no member of the *ena* must attend festivities in the house of the offender. This sentence, I was told, soon brings the culprit to heel; he will kneel down in front of the *Etsu* and ask him for forgiveness, protesting that he would henceforth mend his ways. In certain age-grade associations, especially in Bida, fines are inflicted in the case of graver offences against the *ena* code. Expulsion is never practised, not even as a penalty of the gravest of all age-grade offences—misconduct with the bride or wife of a comrade. However, my inquiries into the occurrence of this offence were invariably answered with a blunt denial. Whether or not it was founded on fact I have no means of deciding. Quite possibly the *esprit de corps* of the *ena* forbade admission of so shameful a charge. The rather too sweeping denial with which my questions were met makes it appear not unlikely: 'We are like brothers,' many of my informants said, 'who would steal a brother's wife?'

In one respect, at least, this statement is undoubtedly an exaggeration. Age-grade comrades are not 'like brothers'. The intimate relation between age-grade comrades which this simile suggests is not true to facts. The relationship existing between friends, on the other hand, is often likened to the relationship between brothers, and does in certain respects resemble it. But age-grade comradeship as all informants agreed, is sharply distinguished from friendship, and the mutual obligations of friendship in no way coincide with those implied in *ena* membership. The subject is worth pursuing.

A man (or woman) will never have more than one friend. The friend may come from a different locality, a different profession, even a differ-

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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ent tribe. I have seen friendship between a Nupe and a Yoruba in Jebba, and between a Kutigi farmer and a *koná* weaver, between a Bida tailor and a peasant from Patigi. Only social class remains an effective barrier even in friendship. Unlike age-grade comrades, friends will help each other with money. Friends may also exchange their children, that is, adopt each other's children, and marry them to their own children—as is also done by men who stand to each other in the relationship of classificatory brothers. This practice has the aim, as the people say, 'to increase friendship'. The essential difference between age-grade fellowship and friendship is thus clear: if the former fashions sentiments of 'belonging together' on the basis of similarities in outlook and interest, i.e. similarities involved in common locality, tribal origin, common occupation, the latter unites individuals *qua* individuals, in a union which is essentially new, and initiates rather than follows existing bonds and sentiments.

It remains to discuss the *ena nyentsugíži*, the age-grade associations of the girls, and the relation between the parallel age-grades of the sexes. I have said already that the girl's *ena* is limited to the youngest age-grade. As explanation of this different organization among the girls the people argue there can be no senior grades among girls, since the approximate age limit of the junior grade, 15 to 16 years, coincides with marriageable age. Unlike boys, the girls can no longer carry on in the *ena* once they are betrothed or married; their duties towards husband and family cannot be reconciled with age-grade activities. This explanation is borne out by the characteristic relations that unite the parallel *ena* of boys and girls. They both take exactly the same titles; and a boy and a girl who bear the same title enter a special, close, relationship: the boy calls the girl *nna*, mother, and the girl the boy *nda*, father. Girls' and boys' groups meet at the various feasts which age-grade associations arrange. It is the duty of the girls to prepare food and beer, the money being contributed by the boys, and to serve it at the *ena* feast. The *Etsu* of the boy's *ena* presents the girls with kola-nuts. The girls will sing and dance, and the boys will watch, and then, in their turn, the boys will perform before the audience of the girls. They all behave with utmost dignity, and even severity: the *ena* is quite obviously not the place for flirts and amorous play of the kind one can observe between boys and girls who meet in the street or market. The symbolism of the names by which girls and boys address each other—names which are never used by lovers or by husband and wife—emphasizes the 'respectable', non-sexual, nature of this relationship, even to the extent of excluding any reference to legitimate sex relations—marriage. It is supposed to happen occasionally that boys and girls who were brought together in the *ena* marry afterwards. I have not come across an actual case. The relationship between them, while the *ena* lasts, is definitely meant to be in the nature of comradeship, and must never lead to sexual relations. Yet once the girl is married, it may be difficult to maintain this aloofness. The danger of jealousy on the part of the husband, and possibly the temptation of carrying comradeship with the other sex to a more intimate relationship, forbid a continuation

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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occasion the mother of the two sisters was present, and spoke harshly to the husband, who shortly afterwards fell ill and died. It was then that people began to suspect Wusa and her family of witchcraft; there was plenty of gossip, and when Aramatu later married her late husband's younger brother, in the usual Nupe levirate, people called him a 'witch's man' and avoided his company. The couple were living on the farm but frequently came to town to stay with Aramatu's mother; this gave rise to new gossip, for it is very unusual for a Nupe man to pay such visits to his mother-in-law, and the people concluded that Aramatu's second husband had come completely under the influence of the two women.

The matter was brought to a head a few years later, by an event that happened in Wusa's household. She was then about thirty-five or forty, and had a guest, a Hausa employed as Muezzin in a Bida mosque, staying in the house. One day he complained about the food Wusa gave him to eat; she resented his remarks and the two quarrelled. Shortly afterwards they had another quarrel, over a trivial matter, the Hausa flying in a rage and striking Wusa in the face so that her nose bled. Wusa's mother happened to visit her that day, found her crying, and was told the reason; apparently nothing further happened then, though my informant was away at the time and found his mother-in-law gone when he returned. He comforted his wife, who was still crying as well as furious, and thought no more about it, until, a fortnight later, the Hausa fell ill, suffering from severe headache and inflammation of the eyes, and suddenly died. Now everyone, the husband included, was convinced that Wusa as well as her mother and sister were all dangerous witches. The three women were formally charged with the crime, with the results described before.

(2) The events here described happened shortly before my second visit to Jebba Island, in the up-river village of Kpatsuwa. The story, much fuller of mystery and miraculous features, was well known in all the riverain villages, and it is interesting to quote two versions, one from Kpatsuwa itself, where I learned it from the people most closely concerned, and the other from Jebba, where it was told me by a man who knew about the events from hearsay only. The two versions, as we shall see, differ not a little, the hearsay version representing clearly something like an incipient myth. To begin with the local account.

The brother's son and prospective heir of the old chief of Kpatsuwa, a young man called Braima, was married to a pleasant young woman, but was also friendly with a much older woman, called Ketswamasa, who was the wife of a friend of his, a local drummer. The relationship between Ketswamasa and Braima was

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754 of the kind known as *nnákata* (lit. 'mother-of-the-house'), which is best described as that of a patroness and her protégé. In-
572 fluential and wealthy older women frequently patronize younger men in this fashion, occasionally sending them gifts of food and
[557] drink, inviting them to their houses, and helping them in various ways. Ketswamasa, who was the best potter of the village and a rich and clever woman, was in a position to offer this patronage, and probably cultivated the friendship of the young chief-to-be for a particular reason; for it was generally assumed that she hoped to become *Sagi* when Braima succeeded to the chieftainship. There was no suspicion at the time that Ketswamasa was a witch.

754 Late one evening in November 1935 Braima was drinking beer in his uncle's house with Ketswamasa's husband. After the latter had left, Braima's wife saw her own husband walk out of the house in the direction of the nearby river, presumably, she thought, to relieve nature. From this walk in the dark Braima never returned but simply disappeared, none of the neighbours having seen him. The wife grew terribly excited, wept and screamed, and accused Ketswamasa of having bewitched her husband. She was not at once believed, though the people were certain that Braima had not fallen into the river or met with some other accident. The chief, greatly worried, went for advice and help, first to the missionary at Mokwa, then to the *Alkali* of Mokwa, and finally travelled to Bida to tell the *Etsu* about the mysterious disappearance of his nephew. The *Etsu* apparently only expressed the pious wish 'May God help' and advised the chief to be patient. So the old man returned to his village, waited for three months, and finally performed the usual burial service for people whose bodies cannot be found. By then everyone was convinced, especially the women, led by Braima's widow and the then *Sagi*, that Braima had been
[683] bewitched and that Ketswamasa was the culprit. Her husband drove her out, without formal divorce, and she went to live with her brother's family. There she was living when I visited Kpatsuwa, friendless and so feared that my informants refused to take me to her house in the dark (though they did so willingly in daytime).

The Jebba informant had the names all wrong, calling the witch Zena and her victim Jiya. I discovered later that these were the names of persons involved in a different witchcraft case, said to have happened several years ago in some other riverain village; quite probably other details of that story have equally merged with the report on the Kpatsuwa happenings, which would be a familiar feature of myth-making. According to the Jebba version Braima (to call him by his true name) suddenly disappeared in the middle of day, while his wife was busy cooking; she saw him go

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
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586 A woman may equally divorce her husband for crime, or she may get special permission from the Court to marry someone else, if he consents, for the period for which her husband is imprisoned. She cannot obtain divorce on any other ground except that of desertion for three years, or failure to keep her. A man can obtain it for other causes, but rarely does so without good cause, for he loses all the dower money he has paid for his wife. Remarriage is permitted to both sexes after a three months' interval.

581 764 Marriage plays an important part in the social life of the Nupe and is *de rigueur* for both sexes. Until a man has married a virgin with due ceremony, he is accounted a nobody and his fellows will neither speak with him nor listen to him. No one will bury an unmarried woman, even though she be a widow. After much delay this degrading duty devolved upon the dogarai, and now upon Government labourers.

584 The would-be bridegroom calls three times upon the girl's parents, each time bringing with him some small present for the father, mother and girl, and then makes known his intentions. The girl's consent has to be obtained, and the parents generally tell him to go and ask her, without mentioning that he has been first to them. If she agrees she tells him to go to her people and thus it is arranged. Indeed it is sometimes she who first suggests to her father whom she would like to marry and he takes the necessary steps. The engagement is formally recognised when the suitor gives 12s. 6d. in money and two calabashes of kola nuts to the father, and 7s. 6d. in money and one calabash of 583 kola nuts to the mother, for them to distribute amongst the 584 male and female members of their family respectively. From this time on the pretendant must work on his father-in-law's farm or house, together with his friends, two or three times a year, and every big Salla he gives to his bride 5s. worth of clothes and 2s. to plait her hair. This may last for some years, as a boy may be betrothed at the age of ten or twelve and a girl at five or seven. These early engagements are, however, considered undesirable, and the yearly cost to the groom effectually tends to discourage them. A careful count is kept of all that he gives, so that it may be returned if the girl should ultimately refuse to consummate the marriage. Once they are engaged the boy [574] and girl may not play together, which up to the time of marriage they may do with anyone else. In fact a boy and girl may declare themselves "saranchi," or great friends, and they are allowed to go to each other's houses until one or other of them marries.

585 When the time for consummating a marriage has come the groom gives his wife three cloths and a handkerchief, at a minimum value of 30s., and if she does not like those he has selected, she returns them and he must send others till she is satisfied. At the same time he gives her parents £2 10s., which they spend on

The men eat together in a similar way, but apart from the women, and tiny boys may feed with either. Any snacks such as honey-cakes, or fruit, are eaten at odd times in the day, and water is always drunk after meals, not at them. Eggs were never eaten, but the practice of doing so is gradually creeping in.

In the ordinary routine of life people get up at 4 or 5 a.m., observe salla, and go about their respective avocations which, with a two hours' interval at mid-day, they pursue until 6 p.m. when they again make salla and have their evening meal. This ended, the children, boys and girls alike, go and dance in the market, from which they are retrieved by their elders, with some difficulty, about 9 p.m. and sent to bed. The men pay each other visits, and sit talking in groups of three or four till about 11 p.m., or on bright nights as long as the moon is up. Women do the same, but in their own compounds. They do not pay many visits, but go to see their mothers once every month and their sisters more rarely. Their husbands encourage friendship between their wives and the wives of their friends. If a man is at home when his wife receives a visitor he salutes her and goes out, and when he goes to visit his friend he goes in to salute the women of the house, and then either sits outside with his friend or goes to his hut. A man is expected to call on his parents-in-law every Friday, the Muhammadan holiday, but is never accompanied by his wife, unless it is to accuse her of some ill deed.

The incoming of the Muhammadan New Year is a time for great rejoicing. On New Year's Eve everyone eats as much as he or she can hold, and the poor can ask for a meal from anyone. Next day they make prayer, and everyone contributes in alms according to his means, with a minimum of a hundred cowries, which the Mallams distribute amongst the needy. A Mallam then foretells events of general interest for the coming year, when the rains will come, and whether they will be heavy or light, the success of the crops, whether there will be much sickness and in what months, whether there will be fertility amongst the stock, and amongst the people, and the best month for the purposes, etc. It is a day for visiting amongst the grown-ups, and calls are made on all persons of importance. On their return from prayer the children play a game. They may raid the houses of any uncle or aunt, grandparent, or one following the same trade as their father, and take anything they can lay hands on, unless and up to the time the person raided gives each child twenty cowries. The elders may not defend their own property, but the children of the household do, and battles are waged between the young people. This custom is dying out where there are white men.

Other games played by the children are hide-and-seek and king-of-the-castle, but they rarely have toys, and never balls.